



MICHAEL CAINE

Michael Caine is a prolific actor. Over the years, he's produced film after film, some superb, some iffy to say the least.

He has been to movies what Barbara Cartland is to books: there never seems to be a pause in the output. And it's a credit to the man that whatever character he's playing, nice or nasty, comic or sinister, he's never less than totally convincing.

After nine years in Los Angeles, he's back on home territory, happily domiciled in his Thames Valley home (with, naturally, a luxury London home in spraucy Chelsea Harbour) with wife Shakira, and a 10 acre garden alongside the River Thames.

The trappings of the self-made millionaire hang easily on him but his public persona is of a nice guy who enjoys his

riches but has never lost touch with his roots. Few people, even in these recession-ridden days, have a bad word for Michael.

The new video release is a black comedy "A Shock To The System," (Medusa Home Video) in which he plays a cheeky New York businessman who decides to bump off his nagging wife (Swoosie Kurtz from "Dangerous Liaisons") and a creepy yuppie business rival (Peter Riegert from "Local Hero") and maybe even his suspicious new young love Elizabeth McGovern or dogged detective Will Patton.

Michael took a break from writing his autobiography to chat to me about the movie. "It's a weird film, a strange film, but it's great fun. A black comedy thriller with a wonderful part for me as a charming killer. I got great reviews for it in America. It did very well over there considering you've got to have \$50 million of special effects and stunts to have a blockbuster in America now.

"It's a similar kind of thing to the old British movie 'Kind Hearts and Coronets', with Dennis Price bumping off all his relatives, but it's a completely American movie except for me. There's no one even remotely English connected with it except

A lot of people know that our most prolific film actor is home again. He talks to Jon White about his new video release.

director Jan Egelson, who flew over from America to see me in London.

"Somehow, I always integrate well into an American setting. I did with 'Hannah And Her Sisters'. I integrate easier for them than I do for the British, because the British see me as intrinsically British, but what they forget is that America is a nation of immigrants: 75 per cent of the people you meet don't speak with an American accent, but they are American and everyone has a grandmother in the attic somewhere who doesn't speak English. So the acceptance of people into an immigrant nation is much easier.

"Americans regard me as an American, you see, because I've been around so long and I'm so well known they don't see me as what they would call a Limey. I've often asked why that is, and they always say well you're not like one of those British guys. You're like a regular guy. And what they mean is they usually meet some toffee-nosed diplomat with a plummy voice who talks down, who's condescending. None of



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which I am. Up with which I will not put.

"I don't have a game plan for my career. I always just do the next picture I like. They give me the scripts to read and I work out which ones to do. I can visualise what a script *should* turn into, but not what it will. Some people wondered whether I should be playing the part of a sympathetic murderer in 'A Shock To The System'. But the basis of all movies has always been who do you root for?"

"In 'A Shock To The System' people may well be shocked by what I'm doing at the beginning of the picture, but they're rooting for me in the end. That was my worry with it. All the way through that picture I was worried about that. But they changed the ending about three times. Could a murderer be allowed to get away with it?"

"In the end they didn't want to kill me off, which is a good idea. I got killed off in three films in the 70s, and it's an even worse idea than killing John Wayne off".

Far left: Michael Caine with Steve Martin in "Dirty Rotten Scoundrels". Above: "A Shock To The System". Right: a scene from "Alfie". Far right: damp moment from "Jaws: The Revenge".

